

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application, in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks and arguments, is respectfully requested.

Claims 26-32 are currently pending in this divisional application, and the Examiner's indication that Claim 32 contains patentable subject matter is noted with appreciation. By the foregoing amendment, Claims 26 and 29 have been revised. Accordingly, Claims 26-32 remain in this application for consideration and allowance.

Turning first to matters of form, the Examiner has objected to certain minor informalities in Claim 26. By the foregoing amendment this objection has been overcome by amending Claim 26 as suggested by the Examiner.

Turning now to the merits of applicant's claims, Claims 26-31 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,250,197 to Sanderson. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Via independent Claim 26, each of applicant's rejected Claims 26-31 specifies aircraft armament apparatus having:

a machine gun support structure mounted on an upper end of a recited support arm for azimuth rotation relative thereto about a generally vertical axis, and elevation rotation about a generally horizontal axis, and

an elevation limiting structure associated with the machine gun structure and operative to **variably limit the available elevation rotation arc magnitude of the machine gun support structure in response to azimuth rotation thereof.**

Representatively, but not by way of limitation the claimed machine gun support structure is the yoke assembly 54 (see FIGS. 6-8 and 11), and the elevation limiting structure is the elevation limiting system 332 (see FIG. 30). As described in applicant's specification (see page 28, line 23 through page 30, line 23), the elevation limiting system 332 functions to automatically and variably limit the **available elevation rotation arc magnitude** of the machine gun support structure 54 in response to azimuth rotation of the machine gun support structure.

More specifically, as representatively shown in FIGS. 26 and 27, the elevation limiting system 332 permits the machine gun support structure 54 to (1) vertically pivot through a total available elevation rotation arc magnitude of 18 degrees when the machine gun support structure is within an azimuth arc range of between zero and 64 degrees, and (2) vertically pivot through a **greater** total available elevation rotation arc magnitude of 50 degrees when the machine gun support structure is within an azimuth arc range of between 64 and 164 degrees.

This claimed elevation limiting structure function of **variably limiting the available elevation rotation arc magnitude** of the machine gun support structure in response to azimuth rotation of the machine gun support structure set forth in Claims 26-31 is not disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,250,197 to Sanderson. Instead, as set forth in the specification of this patent (beginning on line 26 of column 17), the machine gun support structure (and thus the supported machine gun) is vertically pivotable between a maximum "up" position and a fully lowered position in which the gun barrel is tilted downwardly at an angle of about 55 degrees. Importantly, this available elevation arc magnitude is not varied in response to changes in the azimuth angle of the machine gun support structure.

What changes with respect to the azimuth angle of the machine gun support structure (due to the forwardly tilted axis 140 about which the azimuth rotation of the machine gun support structure occurs) is the maximum upward firing angle of the supported machine gun. The available elevation rotation arc magnitude of the machine gun support structure remains **constant** throughout the entire available azimuth arc of the machine gun support structure - it is clearly not **variably limited** as required in the present applicant's Claim 26-31. It is thus respectfully submitted that none of applicant's Claims 26-31 is anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,250,197 to Sanderson. Via its dependency from allowable Claim 26, Claim 32 is also seen to be allowable in its present form.

In view of the foregoing amendment, remarks and arguments, all of the claims currently pending in this application are now seen to be in a condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance of Claims 26-32 is therefore earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is hereby requested to telephone the undersigned attorney of record at 972/516-0030 if such would further or expedite the prosecution of the instant application.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450,

on May 24, 2004
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